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ABSTRACT

The College of Education at the University of Idaho (UI) is embarking on the first year of a project to restructure its teacher education program and refocus it to reflect national standards and place K-12 students at the center of preservice learning. Teacher education students are being prepared to meet the needs of school students through an inquiry-based program that incorporates self and learner examination, competent interaction with the knowledge base, habits of skilled inquiry and reflection, and professional and leadership development. Service learning is integrated into coursework. The program includes systematically designed field experiences culminating in a 1-year internship that will serve as a starting point for continuing professional development. The core experiences are based on: emphasis on learners, emphasis on self as a professional, emphasis on pedagogical constructs, and emphasis on school, community, and instructional context. Restructuring will occur in four phases: Diverse Learners in School and Social/Cultural Contexts; Pedagogical Development I (Creating a Learning Climate); Pedagogical Development II (Planning and Assessing Teaching and Learning); and the Teacher As Leader in School and Community Cultures. This paper provides details on the implementation of Phase I. (SM)

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MAPPING EDUCATION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:

A UI Perspective

Paper Presented at the Northwest Association of Teacher Educators
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MAPPING EDUCATION FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM:

A UI Perspective

Introduction to Restructuring Teacher Education

Over the years there has been a clamor for increased education standards, more teacher accountability and better school administration. Numerous books and reports (Goodlad, 1984, 1990, 1994; Holmes Group, 1986, 1990; NBPTS, 1991) have been written commenting on the state of education and the preparation of teachers, with virtually all states busy trying to develop standards that can be used to guide changes to education, especially to preservice teacher education.

Leadership will come through various avenues and will involve all colleges and universities that have teacher education programs. The University of Idaho is at the helm in helping to create change for the state of Idaho, and is working diligently with school districts, private business and industry, state and government agencies and private foundations to bring into being a restructured program that meets the needs of our modern society. Leadership thrust is coming from faculty leaders and administrators interested in creating a preservice program that are based on the best available thinking and research.

After numerous faculty committee meetings, reviews of literature and reflective thinking, the University of Idaho began its revised approach to teacher education by initiating a course titled Diverse Learners in Schools with Social and Cultural Contexts. This course replaces a traditional course titled Introduction to Teaching and emphasizes inquiry thinking and constructivist knowledge acquisition. This paper has as its focus this first course or phase of the restructuring effort.

Restructuring Teacher Education - UI

The College of Education at the University of Idaho is embarking on the first year of an ambitious project to restructure its teacher education program and refocus it to reflect national standards and place K - 12 students at the center of preservice learning. Teacher education students are being prepared to meet the needs of students through an inquiry-based program that incorporates self and learner examination, competent interaction with the knowledge base, habits of skilled inquiry and reflection and professional and leadership development. The integration of service learning into coursework throughout the program will ensure that a community of learners will be developed both in academic settings and in society. The program has as a major feature systematically designed field experiences culminating in a year long internship that will serve as a starting point for continuing professional development. When restructuring is completed the program should provide a model for other institutions to reference and perhaps emulate.

Restructuring is taking place based on a core of experiences connected to standards designed to help preservice teachers develop the knowledge, skills, understandings, and attitudes to become successful professional educators.

The core experiences are based on the following four major categories:

CATEGORY A: EMPHASIS ON LEARNERS so that beginning teachers:

(1) Utilize their understanding about the relevant aspects of diversity to create learning experiences adapted to the needs of diverse learners.
(2) Integrate their understanding about theories of human learning and development to provide learning opportunities that support the cognitive, social, and personal development of learners.
(3) Use their knowledge about the factors influencing students' lives, within and outside of school settings, to foster effective relationships and communication with learners.

CATEGORY B: EMPHASIS ON SELF AS A PROFESSIONAL so that beginning teachers:

(1) Develop and articulate an awareness of self - including assumptions, attitudes, and beliefs about the teaching and learning process - and use this awareness to guide and modify teaching practice.
(2) Use self-assessment processes that evaluate strengths, areas for growth, and the effects of their choices on learners in order to engage in continuous professional development opportunities.

(3) Design a teaching and learning portfolio to organize, document, and publicly share what they can do as a teacher.

CATEGORY C: EMPHASIS ON PEDAGOGICAL CONSTRUCTS so that beginning teachers:

(1) Use knowledge of curriculum and instructional planning to create and modify learning opportunities based upon subject matter, students, community, and curricular goals.
(2) Integrate their understanding of a variety of teaching and learning strategies in order to encourage students' development of critical thinking, problem solving, and proficiency in knowledge and skills while making subject matter accessible to students.
(3) Demonstrate technological literacy in order to effectively use technology as a tool to enhance teaching and learning.
(4) Use knowledge about a wide array of formal and informal assessment strategies to enhance knowledge of learners, evaluate student performance, and modify teaching and learning strategies.
(5) Use knowledge about learners to create and maintain positive, purposeful learning environments.

CATEGORY D: EMPHASIS ON SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, AND INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXT so that beginning teachers:

(1) Relate experiences in school to larger social issues in order to make decisions based upon a consideration of the ethical consequences of classroom practices and school policy.
(2) Foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support student learning and well being.
(3) Use their understanding of teachers' roles within and beyond the classroom to participate in all aspects of the teaching profession.

Restructuring Phases

Restructuring will take place in four major phases, the first of which is currently being implemented and is the focus of this paper. These phases have been tentatively labeled:

ED 1 - Diverse Learners in School and Social /Cultural Contexts

ED 2 - Pedagogical Development I: Creating a Learning Climate

ED 3 - Pedagogical Development II: Planning and Assessing Teaching and Learning

ED 4 - The Teacher as Leader in School and Community Cultures

While the four strands above, and the resulting standards, will be integrated into all phases of the Core experience, emphasis will be given to particular ones at particular times. For example ED 1 will have the following standard emphasis:

A1 - Utilize their understanding about the relevant aspects of diversity to create learning experiences adapted to the needs of diverse learners.

A3 – Use their knowledge about the factors influencing students' lives within and outside of school settings, to foster effective relationships and communication with learners.

D1 – Relate experiences in school to larger social issues in order to make decisions based upon a consideration of the ethical consequences of classroom practices and school policies.

Phase I Implementation

Implementation of ED 1 began fall 1998 with four sections of approximately 150 students. A comparison of the more traditional course (Introduction to Teaching – ED 201) with the new course (Diverse Learners in the School: Social & Cultural Contexts – ED 1) will be given.

Catalog Course Description

ED 201 - Interpersonal communication, human relations including multicultural concerns, discipline, classroom evaluation techniques, and use of technology. Emphasis was placed on an introduction to the "world of teaching" through classroom observation and participation (A 30-hour off-campus clinical experience in a K-12 classroom was required). Prerequisite: sophomore standing.

ED 1 - Introduction to an inquiry-based model to examine student learning and diversity in relation to the purposes and functions of schools in society; focus is on K-12 exposure to diverse learners in a variety of contexts (30 hours of field experience is required).

Course Objectives

ED 201 – The objectives of the course were to: 1) introduce participants to the role of teaching and it contexts to better prepare them to make a career choice, 2) help students begin to "think like a teacher", and 3) encourage students to become reflective practitioners through critical thinking.

ED 1 – The course is designed to assist future educators in gaining knowledge and understanding of students in the context of schools and the larger society. The focus of the course

is on students and furthermore in the contexts that affect students' lives and learning in schools. The course is structured around inquiry-based process of exploration in which students identify and investigate questions that build a knowledge base of education and content areas. The specific objectives of the course are to: 1) develop and demonstrate an informed understanding about the diversity within students in today's schools, 2) develop and demonstrate an informed understanding of the cultural, psychological, school-based, sociological, and political contexts in which students live and learn, 3) begin the transition from student to teacher by developing the skills necessary to become an inquiry-based producer of knowledge, including participating in numerous teaching and other field-based experiences, and 4) assess students' commitment to teaching as a profession by developing and demonstrating a comprehensive understanding of the range of roles taken by teachers.

Course Format

ED 201 – The course used a variety of teaching methodologies, including small group discussions, lectures (usually delivered by guest speakers), and media presentations. Students were invited to be active participants in their field experience setting. The laboratory manual, The Experience of Teaching (Pedras, 1996) served as a guide for the school-based activities integral to the course.

The course met two hours per week, and included an additional 30-hour field experience in area schools.

ED 1 – The course uses several teaching methods such as lecture, discussions and research inquiries. The focus is on asking questions, inquiry, finding information, solving problems, and collaborating.

The course meets three hours per week. One hour is released for students to do lab and field assignments. A 30-hour field experience in schools was required in fall 1998. In spring 1999, an additional 10 hours of field experience in another school setting, and five hours of service learning, was added to the course requirements.

Course Materials, Text, and Required Readings

ED 201 – Student were required to keep a class notebook for notes and reflection question responses. A laboratory manual titled The Experience of Teaching (Pedras, 1996) was designed for the course. Students were also required to complete several readings including books and articles. These readings were placed on reserve at the College of Education library.

ED 1 – The text selected for the course is Becoming a Teacher (Parkay & Stanford, 1998). A laboratory manual Diverse Learners in the Schools (Pedras, Goc Karp, Kozicki & Heide, 1999) was also developed to assist students with field experiences. Students are also assigned outside reading in the library and Internet research activities.

Student Evaluation Procedures and Grades

ED 201 – The course grade was a composite of in-class activities and field experiences. Total possible points for the course was 100. Approximately 70 of those points resulted from in-class activities and homework assignments with 30 points allotted for field experiences. The grading scale adopted followed the university's guidelines.

ED 1 – The course grade consists of 1) enhancement and lab/field assignments (180 points), 2) field observations and participation (45 points), and 3) inquiry project (45 points). Total possible points for the course is 270 points. A grading rubric guideline is used for each of the three items above.

Course Content

ED 201 – The course outline consisted of the following topical areas: Introduction to the profession, organization and governance of schools, legal aspects of teaching, multicultural education, special needs students, teaching and learning styles, management and organization of classrooms and professional development.

Also included were the following activities and/or field assignments: mini lesson deliveries, multi-media technology project, lesson preparation and deliveries, library and internet research, and portfolio development

ED 1 – The course is divided into four major sections: 1) diversity in learners, 2) social concerns and learners, 3) learning and teaching environments, and 4) family, school and community influences. Each of the major sections includes assignments which are divided into two categories; enhancement assignments and lab/field assignments. Both are developed to expand and support students' understanding of the course content.

A chart (A Comparison Between Traditional 201 and Non-traditional ED 1) was developed to highlight some major differences between the two courses and can be found in the appendix.

Special Features of ED 1

Teaching Diverse Students in School and Social/Cultural Contexts (ED 1), is designed to assist future educators in gaining knowledge and understanding of students in the context of schools and the larger society. In order to facilitate this learning, special features to ED 1 have been incorporated. These include an inquiry focus with an inquiry/action research project, a service learning component, and grant writing opportunities.

Action research in teacher education is the process of systematically researching personal teaching practices, reflecting on their use in the classroom, and understanding the context in which a practitioner teaches. Most importantly, action research allows a teacher to learn about his or her students and what teaching practices can best be implemented to enhance learning. Action research involves the teacher raising questions that are important to the students and the context of the classroom. Data is then collected to assist in understanding the questions posed.

Specifically in ED 1, preservice teachers practice and implement an inquiry based approach which utilizes action research. Preservice teachers generate and formulate questions about modern-day students for inquiry and utilize at least two research methods to support inquiry and produce a knowledge base. Analysis of the data, findings, and implications are discussed and presented through a formal research poster presentation.

In addition to learning about students and teaching through the inquiry/action project, preservice teachers incorporate and develop service learning as a viable teaching method. Service

learning is a teaching method that involves "learning by doing". This is accomplished through the application of skills and knowledge while addressing unmet needs in the school and greater community. This method incorporates student's learning and development through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet the school or community's needs. It integrates the student's academic curriculum that therefore enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom (National and Community Service Trust Act, 1990).

In ED 1, preservice teachers are asked to participate in, and implement a service learning project for students in their practicum settings. Elements of the service learning project that are to be incorporated are 1) integrated learning, 2) high service, 3) student voice, 4) reflection throughout process, and 5) collaboration. Collaboration with mentor teachers, administration, and community members is facilitated by the preservice teacher in this process.

As preservice teachers learn more about the field of teaching, the modern-day student, and various teaching methodologies, budgetary concerns of project funding becomes an immediate concern. ED 1 students are provided with the tools necessary in grant writing. Where to find potential resources, how to write a proposal, what pieces of information should be included, etc. are discussed and practiced in the course. Preservice teachers have an opportunity to construct actual grant proposals for funding which is to be used in their practicum placement setting.

The three elements previously mentioned, provide a unique opportunity for students to meet course objectives and learn new strategies by which new knowledge can be obtained.

Summary

The process of restructuring teacher education programs at the University of Idaho, is an endeavor to assist development of a more professional, better-prepared, and more reflective practitioner in education. Future educators will be given the tools of inquiry, analysis, and application needed to understand and provide for the variety of contexts that affect how the modern day student lives and learns in school and society. Experiences which emphasize learners; self as a

professional; pedagogical constructs; and school, community, and instructional contexts enable preservice teachers to develop a knowledge base and skills needed to become an effective practitioner.

The long journey of redesign of the teacher education program is just beginning. Continual analysis, monitoring, and reflection of the process is necessary for successful completion of the redesign which is meant to benefit students' preparation for the field of education.

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Appendix 1

A COMPARISON BETWEEN TRADITIONAL 201 AND NON-TRADITIONAL ED 1

DIMENSION	TRADITIONAL 201	NON-TRADITIONAL ED 1
Overall Focus of Course	What prospective teachers need to know about the profession	What prospective teachers need to know about the K-12 learners
Course Format	Small group discussions, lectures, media presentations	Discussions, lectures, research inquiries
Content	Topics including: ♦ Employment opportunities/salary ♦ Certification requirements ♦ Preparing and developing instruction ♦ Using diversity to enhance teaching and learning ♦ Working with special needs students ♦ Using computer technology for teaching ♦ Organization and administration of schools ♦ Ethical and legal considerations ♦ Professional organizations	Questions including: ♦ How do you learn to be a teacher through asking questions/inquiring? ♦ How does student diversity affect how and what I teach? ♦ What do you need to know about how social relationships, family, and community affect student learning in classrooms? ♦ How do school and community work together to provide a supportive learning environment?
Methods Used to Teach the Course	Lectures, discussions, media presentations	Lectures, discussions, research inquiries, asking questions, finding information, solving problems, collaborating
Learning Methods in University Classroom	Seat time, listening, taking notes, doing homework	Group work, active learning, sharing information, field-based discussion, teaming
Role of Instructor	Expert who has the answers	Facilitator, partner, guide
Field Experience	♦ 30 hours of field experience in a school setting	♦ 30 hours of field experience in a school setting (fall 1998 & spring 1999) ♦ 10 hours of field experience in another setting (spring 1999) ♦ 5 hours of service learning (spring 1999)
Role of K-12 Mentor Teachers	Expert, assistant, aide	Facilitator, partner, guide
Products	Completed and turned into instructor to meet course requirements	Authentic – real purposes; real audiences. Completed for professional development